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PINR, IN

SUBJECT: THE SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH INDIAN FOREIGN  
SECRETARY MENON

Classified By: SCA PDAS DONALD A. CAMP FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)  
AND (D)

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Participants  
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United States

The Secretary  
Under Secretary Burns  
Acting PA Assistant Secretary Robert Wood  
SCA PDAS Donald Camp  
Secretary's Staff, Joe MacManus  
SCA Notetaker, John Ashworth

India

Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon  
Ambassador Ronen Sen  
DCM Arun Singh  
Joint Secretary Gaitri Kumar  
Director Naveen Srivastava  
Counsellor (Political) Jawed Ashraf

¶1. (C) Summary: In a friendly March 9 meeting with Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon, Secretary Clinton outlined her vision of a "stand-alone global partnership" with India. She and Menon discussed global issues (climate change, world economy, peacekeeping), regional issues (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka), and bilateral issues (End-Use Monitoring, counterterrorism). The Secretary and Menon further agreed to work towards a President Obama/Prime Minister Singh meeting at the G-20 Summit, to link up the U.S. and Indian climate change envoys, to seize on a "window of opportunity" to cooperate in Sri Lanka, and to coordinate better in Afghanistan, starting at the March 31 Hague conference. This was the highest level meeting between U.S. and Indian officials since the President assumed office. End Summary.

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Global Issues -- Climate, Economy, Peacekeeping  
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¶2. (C) The Secretary and Menon both expressed hope that Prime Minister Singh (health permitting) and President Obama could discuss the global economy and climate change on the margins of the April 2 G-20 Summit in London. The Secretary noted the deepening bilateral economic and commercial relationship and highlighted the need to avoid protectionism. She lent her support to increased bilateral climate cooperation, perhaps between Todd Stern and Shyam Saran during the latter's March 23 visit to Washington. She brought up the tenuous status of Indian peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Menon said the government in Kinshasa sent an official note verbale asking India to withdraw its troops. He said India could work out an arrangement, and would not leave in a haste, but needs the Congolese government to rescind the note.

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Regional Issues -- Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan  
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13. (C) On Sri Lanka, the Secretary asked Menon how the United States and India can work together to improve the humanitarian situation. Menon said it was a matter of days before the government concluded the conventional war, and there was a small window to separate the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from the civilian population and convince the government to quickly rebuild the north. They agreed that the U.S. and India would look for practical ways to cooperate in Sri Lanka. (Note: On March 10, U/S Burns handed Menon a non-paper on additional areas for coordination in Colombo and among capitals. End Note.)

14. (C) Menon relayed his concerns about internal instability in Pakistan and the difficulty of dealing with fractured leadership and discontinuity between the military and civilians. Menon believed the key would be to change the Pakistani army's mindset away from support for terrorists. He expressed his government's concerns over U.S. sales to Pakistan of weapons that are "unrelated to counter-terrorism," presumably a reference to F-16s.

15. (S) The Secretary thanked Menon for India's contributions in Afghanistan and invited active Indian participation in the March 31 Hague conference on Afghan reconstruction. Menon said India has quietly begun coordinating more with NATO and could broaden assistance to include training police and security forces. Menon said he hoped for a peaceful caretaker period before free and fair August 20 elections. The Secretary noted that the Taliban could increase attacks during the pre-election period to try to destabilize the government.

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Bilateral Issues -- End-Use Monitoring, Counterterrorism  
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16. (C) Responding to the Secretary's point on end-use monitoring, Menon said India is already doing monitoring; it is just a matter of getting the lawyers to find a way to put it on paper. He said the issue was basically "soluble," and described the monitoring agreement as about more than defense sales but important for the long-term bilateral relationship. The Secretary expressed our solidarity with India in dealing with terrorists and emphasized the importance of building on a strong foundation of bilateral counterterrorism cooperation. Menon said an improved U.S. - India counterterrorism relationship was one of the few good things to come out of the Mumbai attacks. He thanked the Secretary for the positive role the Federal Bureau of Investigation is playing in the Mumbai attacks investigation and expressed hope for the positive trajectory to continue.

CLINTON